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4-5224

28 August 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Inspector General

SUBJECT: Proposed establishment of high-level Planning Staff within CIA.

REFERENCE: Draft of proposed memo dtd 23 July 1953 to DCI, entitled "Planning."

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1. Referring further to our "squawkbox" conversation of this morning, I am returning to you herewith the reference draft of proposed memorandum to Mr. Dulles, which I understand you drew up. I have elicited from various of the staff officers of the DD/P side of the house their comments concerning this proposal, and I find that, on balance, they are all opposed to the concept of a high-level planning board which would have an across-the-boards or total responsibility for Agency planning. C/FI, C/PP and C/PM, as well as C/PPC have independently recommended against such a planning staff, each giving his own reasons, some of which are quite cogent. However, it is my feeling that much of the difficulty here results from the fact that the concept of the proposed planning staff has not been sufficiently spelled out, nor have the terms of reference or delimitations of authority and function been stated to the extent necessary to enable these officers to comment in a manner which does either the concept or their own positions full justice. This is not a criticism of what I understand to be an initial effort to present the problem, but on the contrary is a commentary upon the desirability of a further round-the-table discussion of this matter with the Director participating before going into the next step on paper. Until we know more about what is in the boss' mind it is exceedingly difficult for you or anyone else to put down on paper a concept that can be usefully commented upon by the others concerned.

2. Having said this much, I will now attempt to outline in very brief detail a few of the thoughts which I have had on this general subject. These thoughts are very tentative and I do not put them forward as my own final position -- but rather offer them to you as a guide.

3. Contrary to the views held by most of the others, I feel that there is a place within the Agency for a high-level planning function. However, this planning function should not concern itself

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with too much of the detail of operational planning and should have more to do with broad questions of Agency policy and the establishment of general priorities, etc., for our operational programs. We all know (which you have put your own finger on) one of the weaknesses or evils of high-level planning boards, viz., their tendency to become "ivory tower" and unrealistic in their approach to actual situations and operating problems. There is only one way that I know of to overcome this tendency and that is to place the planners in a position to receive a continuous flow of information and viewpoints which are both relevant and necessary to the preparation of meaningful plans. They cannot get this by osmosis nor by occasional briefings by the experts and the operators. Your suggestion of the use of "panels" is good, but in my opinion does not go far enough. They must be so engaged in the current activities and work of the Agency as to be in the blood stream. It also follows from this that they can and should be given responsibilities which are of actual benefit and use to the Agency on a current basis. For example, the chairman of the planning staff might himself become the chairman of the Project Review Committee, thus placing him in a position to learn about and participate in passing upon Agency projects which come before the PRC. We have long sought a more satisfactory set-up for the PRC, and this might well provide the answer.

4. Also of great importance in my opinion is the proposition that the top planning staff be completely aware of national policies and national objectives. CIA programs -- at least on the "action" side -- must be directly related to and specifically designed to be in support of our foreign policy and military objectives; otherwise they become meaningless and in some cases actually mischievous. The way in which to assure the fullest exposure of the CIA planning staff to US policy deliberations would be to have the chairman sit as the CIA member of the NSC Planning Board. (I am aware of the fact that DD/I would have objections to this proposal and there might be some other way of working it out which would be more acceptable to him -- but in any case the manner in which it is finally resolved should take this point into account and make provision for direct participation of our own planning staff in the governmental policy deliberations with which CIA is concerned.)

5. My final point has to do with security and the desirability of maintaining reasonable compartmentation within the Agency, at least in so far as covert activities are concerned. It is in the

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nature of things that certain extremely sensitive activities, in the FI and PP fields particularly, will have to be staffed out and planned with the knowledge of the very fewest number of individuals within the Agency who must have knowledge in order for the operation to be successful. In some cases this can (and has been) as few as 2 or 3, although admittedly this is unusual and in the typical case a somewhat larger number of persons are knowledgeable. Even so not all of the persons are made fully knowledgeable concerning the significance and true objectives of the operation. I therefore believe that in any terms of reference for the creation of a planning board there should be fairly clear lines of demarcation and delimitation. Otherwise there are sure to be misunderstandings and hurt feelings -- the planners feeling entitled to "know all the facts about all operations in order to discharge their over-all responsibility", and the covert operators resisting the demands of the planners and resorting to evasive tactics and disingenuousness.

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Attachment (1)
Reference draft memorandum.

cc: C/OP-DD/P